

SOME REASONS
FOR THINKING, THAT THE
GREEK LANGUAGE
WAS BORROWED FROM THE
CHINESE:
IN NOTES
ON
THE GRAMMATICA SINICA
OF
Monf. FOURMONT.

DELECTANT, FATEOR, INVENTÆ ORIGINATIONES.

I AM REALLY SO FAR GONE, AS TO TAKE PLEASURE IN
REVERIES OF THIS KIND. POPE.



P R E F A C E.

THE splendor of the Greek language compared with the poverty of the Chinese; the distance of the countries from each other; and the silence of History concerning any communication between them; will be early objections, in the minds of my readers, to the following hypothesis.

The first of these is easily dismissed; the greatest things must have small beginnings; Hercules, as well as Hylas, was rocked in a cradle.

As to the rest—What do we know of the migrations and intercourse of men, previous to the

commencement of the Greek annals ; an era of yesterday, when we reflect on the probable age of the world ?

Who were the Pelasgi, and whence ? Asiatics, most certainly ; and this is all that we know of their origin : a circumstance which makes it probable that they came from the most distant parts of Asia.

The Egyptians and Indians worshipped a cow : they distinguished the signs of the Zodiac by the figures of the same animals : they had many other points of agreement. Are we to call in question the facts, because we have no records of the commerce that produced them ?

Our first historians were Greeks, remarkable for their inattention to the origin of things ; or, which is the same thing, for the vanity of assuming all inventions to themselves. Had they known and acknowledged the history of Moses, they would have set up the Greek, at its highest refinement, for the language of Adam : so ignorant or so careless were they in this matter, that they knew not the roots of their own tongue : those roots were not natives ; and no wonder

wonder they should overlook them in the derivatives and beauties of their own creation.

Lipsius discovered, not many years ago, a striking affinity between the old Persic and the German language*. The learned were amazed — The wonder is, that it was not discovered much sooner. There is not so great a difference in languages as is generally thought: the case is, the difference is on the surface; the agreement, like Truth, is at the bottom of the well.

Bochart has given us a journal of the travels of the Hebrew, far exceeding what I attribute in this way to the Chinese. After all, what is distance on such a spot as this earth of ours! that which an individual may go round in little more than twelve months, might not colonies have compassed in the succession of ages?

In cultivated life societies are stationary; they grow fond and proud of their own improvements: in an unimproved state mankind

* Vide Lipsii Epist. ad Belgas.

are wanderers; the shepherd and hunter are, what the philosopher affects to be, citizens of the world. Happily, the era is within record, at which our parents came down from the rocks of the North; and their language is now hissing on the banks of the Ganges. The spirit of trade has renewed our earliest habits, and brought us round to that East, from whence we set out.

I now come to what would have answered my purpose at the beginning, could I have hoped to obtain it without conditions: I mean, to request of the reader, that he would take up my essay in a spirit of candor; and bear what I have to say, without prejudice or affection.

REASONS,

R E A S O N S, &c.

ON entering into the subject before us, it may not be amiss to cast our eye on a sketch of the Chinese language. My Author gives it in the following manner :

Apud gentes cæteras syllabæ sunt utrinque, id est, ita ut inter vocales consonis adjungendas, vocalis nunc præcedat, nunc sequatur ; et vice versa.

Sed apud Sinas ordinatio omnino alia.

1°. Voces sunt monosyllabæ omnes.

2°. A consona incipiunt omnes, a vocali nunquam.

3°. Nunquam etiam in consonam definunt, exceptis *m*, et *n* ; quarum *m* finalis sonatur ut *ng* ; *n* ut *ne*.



The difference in these final sounds will be sensible in *song—tune*.

The prevalence of the termination in *n* is remarkable throughout the Greek particles, as *δην*, *μην*, *μων*, *γαν*, *νυν*, *συν*, and numberless others: With respect to these, the Greeks, *perhaps*, did no more than preserve the sound just as they found it: but its becoming a favourite final in the inflections of their nouns and verbs, marks an attachment to an early impression; happily, in this, Taste coincided with Habit; for, of all consonants, the *n* final, pronounced as in *tune**, comes the nearest to the softness of the vowel; which was the reason, no doubt, of its having been preferred by the Chinese linguist, who rarely used the *m* final; and, after him, by the Greek, directed to this preference by the force of example, and the delicacy of his ear.

* I say pronounced as in *tune*, because it may have a very different sound; thus, the French, from their predilection for *nasality*, give to their *n* final the sound of *ng*.

It is observable, that the Latins gave the preference to the *m* final ; whether through affectation of independence on the Greek, or that, like their neighbours the Gauls, they delighted in nasal tones *, is a point which I shall not take upon me to determine.

Our Author continues—

Eadem monosyllaba numerum 328 aut paulo ampliore non excedere : multiplicata vocabula esse per Tonos : cum ii toni sint quinque, inde statim effecta vocabula ad minus 1400 vel 1600, et sic linguam humanis sermonibus communem, nec contemnendam efformatam : Voces enim huic et illi populo vulgares raro ultra 1400 aut 1500.



Were it allowable to compare languages by the mere structure of the words, we might conclude, on a survey of the Chinese vocabulary †, that the Greek roots and the

* The sound being stopped from passing through the lips, must necessarily *hum* through the nose.

† See this in the opening of the Grammar.

Chinese monosyllables were the same language.

But, as this would be to appeal to the eye, where the sense should decide, I shall take no advantage of it, *in this place*; but content myself with observing, that the Greek roots do not exceed the number of 200, and that most of them are monosyllables, beginning with a consonant, and ending in a vowel, or diphthong, precisely as in the Chinese.

Whether the root be a perfect monosyllable, or a duad, or even triad, formed on the monosyllable, it is the same thing with respect to the origin of the root: this calls for explanation, which I shall the more readily undertake, as it gives an open into an interesting subject, the rise and progress of the mechanism of the Greek language.

The first innovation of the Greek linguist on the Chinese monosyllable, was extremely simple; it was to divide the diphthong, and give two sounds to that which had but one in the original.

Thus

Thus—gao, lao, nao,
became—γα-ω, λα-ω, να-ω.

This was, perhaps, the first attempt at a duad.

The second was more effectual, by inserting the consonant between the two vowels :

Thus—δαω, δεω, διω, δοω, δυω,
became—αδω, εδω, ιδω, οδω, υδω *.

Here observe the advances of the simple primitive βαω—βημι, βαινω, βαδω, βαδιζω, βιβαζω.

This is a key to the mechanism of the Greek tongue.

By this change introduced into the verbs, they became roots of more vigour, and of a structure better fitted to supply materials for derivation. This was not all : the superiority of a sounding polysyllable over a nerveless monad having gained the ear, and the effect of a *balance* of consonants

* Of this, see numberless examples in the order of the alphabet.

with

with vowels having suggested an idea of a verbal harmony, the happy genius of the Greek seized the advantage, and by a constant application of this principle to the enlargements of derivation, composition, and inflection, he bestowed on his language such a dignity and sweetness, that to his ear, which was a fine one, all other tongues were but the voices of barbarians*.

It has been the fancy of some, to calculate the relative vocality of the Greek and other tongues, by the number of words ending in a vowel, or consonant: This might do in the comparison of monosyllabic languages, but is quite out of the question in the consideration of the Greek:

* Βαρβαροφωνοι. No wonder they should be so to a people, who heard in their cradle such sounds as these:

Ολβιοι ευναζοισθε, και ολβιοι αω ικοισθε.

Theoc.

Had not Milton those sounds in his ear?

————— My ever new delight,
Awake! —————

for,

for, if in words of length (and such for the most part are the Greek) five syllables out of six end in a vowel, as in *απαμειβομενος*, the vowel sounds are to the consonant as five to one; a proportion which, I believe, will pretty nearly hold through all the syllables of the Greek tongue; especially, as the *η* final, from what hath been observed, is to be classed with the vowel terminations *.

It is pleasing in any, but above all, in a problematical process, to contemplate one truth springing out of another.

Thus the beautiful structure of the Greek polysyllable is found to be a happy combination of monosyllables, beginning with a consonant, and ending in a vowel.

To this same structure we owe, that, of all foreign tongues, we articulate the Greek with the greatest facility.

Does not this make it probable, that we

* Κλαγγηδον προκατιζοντων.

come

come nearer to the true articulation of the Greek than of any other dead language ?

And, is not this conjecture confirmed by the pleasure we receive from the sounds of this language * ; a pleasure, which in this, as in all things, must be in proportion to the truth of the impression ?

It may be thought, that words so perfectly simple as the Chinese, might have

* Yet, the Greek, like other tongues, has its *harshnesses* :

Εἶσα σ' ὡς ἰσασιν Ἑλλήνων, ὅσοι,

True, this divine language takes in all the powers of imitation, from the nod of Jove to the hiss of a serpent. Was it for this, that Euripides bore the title of φιλοσινγματος ? In the present instance, the alliteration is a beauty ; thrown on a letter of offensive sound, it aggravates the invectives of Medæa ; her words carry stings ; to the guilty Jason, they were the snakes of Alecto.

Alliteration and iteration are the idioms of passion—So, in the line preceding that just cited :

Εκ των δὲ πρῶτων πρῶτον ἀρξομαι.

And so, his faithful copyist :

Quæ quibus anteferam ? jam, jam —

been in Greece, as well as in China, aboriginal. Even this notion, were it founded, would fall in with my purpose; which is more to point out the steps by which language first rose out of a state of absolute simplicity, than to determine the relation of any one language to another. However, I think it will appear in the course of the following remarks, that the Greeks had a model before them; and that this model was Chinese.

I have admitted, that the sense should decide, in the comparison of languages; but it must be obvious, that it cannot be altogether so in the case before us: for, as the Chinese, by their tones, made every word to stand for five different ideas, the Greeks were not only at liberty to choose any one of the five, but to extend this license to collateral ideas; a license, which the creative genius of this people would stretch to the utmost: for this reason, it must be extremely difficult to determine, in numberless instances, whether the same word did or
did

did not stand for the same idea in the two languages.

In proportion as essential proofs are unattainable, those which spring from circumstances acquire force; in short, were the words in each language the signs of the same ideas, the two languages would be one; and what I propose as a conjecture, would be certainty.

De Verbis.

QUOD apud Sinas monosyllaba sint, ut nomina, ita verba, hinc etiam concludens nec derivata esse posse ulla; quam ob rem omnia esse et simplicia et simplicissima.

2°. Cum monosyllabum unumquodque propriè ac reverà infinitum sit, atque infinitivi loco haberi possit.



The verb, throughout its moods, affirms something; it declares some condition or circumstance annexed to the action. In the infinitive, which I will not call a mood, the verb is at large; it contains no affirmation*; or, in the language of the logician, it

* For this reason, notwithstanding my great respect for the author of the *Grammaire Raisonnée**, I

* The celebrated Arnaud.

it is no proposition : for this reason it assumes, in the Chinese, as we shall see hereafter, the function of a participle ; for, like the participle, being indifferent to all moods, it is equally applicable to them all.

The Chinese having exhausted their vowel terminations on the unmodified signs of ideas, stopped short of inflection ; they do not even apply it to the substantive verb, which consequently, with them, has not the virtue of an auxiliary : they have, therefore, no other means of expressing the circumstances of the action, than by accompanying the principal verb with other verbs declaring

cannot admit the following definition of the verb—"Ce
 " qui est essentiel au verbe, sa seule vraie definition est—
 " vox significans affirmationem."—With submission, it is not in virtue solely of its being a verb that it signifies affirmation ; to attain this, it must be thrown into mood and tense : accordingly, the author finds himself, in the instant, obliged to qualify his definition, by—" Car on
 " ne sauroit trouver de mot qui marque l'affirmation,
 " qui ne soit verbe, ni de verbe qui ne serve a la mar-
 " quer, au moins dans l'indicatif."

the

the circumstances, or, by particles destined to answer the purpose.

The disputes of grammarians touching the first and genuine state of the verb, are determined by the existence of a language, in which, without changing its destination, the verb cannot be made to pass out of the infinitive.

“ Syrorum et Chaldæorum dialectos quis-
 “ quis cum Hebræa lingua conferet, palam
 “ videbit hanc esse antiquiorem, quia sim-
 “ plicissima est.”

Bochart would not have established this test of originality, had he known * that there was a language still more simple than the Hebrew.

The first departure of language from its natural state, was the artificial but happy

* Or, if he knew it, he did not chuse that others should. And here I must observe, that our modern systematizers on language studiously avoid taking much notice of the Chinese.—Facts are unpleasant intruders on fancies.

innovation by inflection. The language which has not, in any one instance, changed the termination of its primitive, stands single and unrivalled in its claim to simplicity.

It is the opinion of some, that men first spoke in a language of inflection *: we may

* Bochart founds his triumph over the supporters of the antiquity of the Syriac, on a circumstance of inflection.—“ *Linguam Hebraicam omnium linguarum esse matricem docent etymologiæ nomen. Vocabula quæ diximus tam sunt in usu Syrorum quam Hebræorum: sed nihil habent quod regerant, cum ventum est ad Adami verba—vocabitur *vira*, quia ex *viro* sumpta est. Hebraicè *is* pro *viro*, ita *issa* pro muliere, vox est usitatissima.*”

We must not trust to authority in these matters: men are often attached to false opinions by the confidence they have in their ability to support them.

“ *Adamo et Evæ inspiravit Deus Hebrææ linguæ cognitionem in ipso momento quo conditi sunt.*”

If a little learning stints the understanding, too much makes it wanton.

“ *Atque ut granum frumenti expurgatum producit aliud cum palea; et ut pater circumcisus generat filium*

may as well be told, that men did not sing before they had a gamut.

“ lium cum præputio ; sic pater regeneratus filium
“ generat extra gratiam.”

Just so would have reasoned a monk of the twelfth century.

After all, it must be confessed, that the Phaleg is a wonderful work ; a singular example of the strength and weakness of human intellect.

Of Tenses.

Cognito semel infinitivo, seu verbi monosyllabo, fiunt per additionem particularum tempora tria.

1°. Præteritum.

2°. Præsens.

3°. Futurum.

Quæ hic tibi orientalium more, qui antiquissimus est, et juxta naturæ ipsius ordinem, explicabuntur.

1°. Præteritum.

Additur tantum monosyllabo, idque in fine, particula seu verbum—

leao		defiit
vel, kuo		transiit.

Hoc modo—

ngo		ego
ço		facere
leao		defii
vel		vel
kuo		transii
feci.		



Where

Where the final vowels, in whatever number they may be, make but one sound, as in the Chinese; and where the termination is subject, as in the Greek, to the variations of inflection, we must not look for correspondence beyond the governing consonant: the Greeks, therefore, can hardly be said to have changed the kuo, or koo, into $\kappa\alpha$, the general designation of their preterperfect; but, in aid of this, they prefixed an augmentative ϵ , strengthening it with the governing consonant of the verb—

As $\epsilon\alpha\omega$ — $\epsilon\epsilon\epsilon\eta\kappa\alpha$
 $\gamma\alpha\omega$ — $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\kappa\alpha$.

De Plusquam-perfecto.



This tense, in the Chinese, is a *double* preter-perfect—

B 4

As,

As,

ngo

ki

kuo

leao

ego

incipere

transitum

finitum

inceperam.



The plusquam-perfectum of the Greek is formed by *doubling* the augmentative sign of the preter-perfect—

As,

γεγραφα

εγεγραφειν

| scripsi

| scripseram.

These strokes of correspondence, taken singly, are trifles ; in succession, and number, they rise into system.

2°. *Præsens.*

2°. *Præsens.*

1°. Verbum seu monosyllabum verbi in præsentî indicari, cum particula aliorum temporum adest nulla.

2°. Locutiones ejusmodi suspensas atque indeterminatas in usu esse atque amari, quod majestatis præ se ferant nescio quid.



This—majestatis nescio quid, seems unhappily applied to a language that labours in every instance to make out the idea: but, whatever may be the nature of this apparent indecision, it certainly prevailed through all the languages of the East: a clear indication that they had all one common parent.

Les langues orientales n'ont que le passé et le futur, ce qui rend ces langues sujettes à beaucoup d'ambiguités, qui ne se rencontrent point dans les autres *.

* Grammaire Raisonnée.

Les Hebreux n'ont ni present, ni imparfait—ils disent—credidi, propter quod locutus sum, au lieu de—credo, et ideo loquor * †.

If the Greeks borrowed the rudiments of their language from the Chinese, or any other of the oriental tongues, they must have been in the early habit of using a preterite for a present tense; and, from custom, so powerful in language, the usage would at times take place, after the necessity had ceased. Had this occurred to the learned Translator of Homer, it might have saved him the trouble of a long, and, to my apprehension, ineffectual comment on the preter-perfect in the following line—

Κλυθι μεν, Αργυροτοξ, ος χρυσην αμφιβεβηκας.

Tempus hoc non est, says the learned

* Supplement au Gram. Raif.

† Nullum tempus est præsens—Is this a metaphysical subtlety, or, the first and most natural conception of the thing?

Critic,

Critic, ut vulgo vocant grammatici, præteritum perfectum, sed *præsens perfectum*.

This may be brought to a short issue—
Had the Poet been forced by the sense to make use of an acknowledged preter-perfect, must he not have employed this very *præsens perfectum*?

Helen, describing the Grecian chiefs, who at the time were standing before her, says—

Ιδοµενεὺς δ' ἔλερωθεν ἐνὶ κρήλεσσι, θεὸς ὤς,
ἔσηκ'— Stat.

So Æschylus—

ἔσηκε κίων— stat columna.

And Euripides—

Δεδοικα σε— metuo te.

The following is still more decisive—

Τοσῶδε γ' ἦσσον, ἢ παρὸς, πεποιθα σοὶ *.

Et tanto minus, quam antea, confido
tibi.

* Med. Eurip.

Had

Had the Latin translation of this passage been exact, the substitution of a preterite for a present tense, would have embarrassed the sense : in the Greek it had the sanction of custom, and the impropriety, for such it is, was lost in the frequency of the practice.

Hebræorum verba nullam habent formam qua tempus præsens imperfectum, sive actio jam instans, propriè exponi potest ; id fit per participium solummodo, vel per verbum substantivum subintellectum*.

The participium solummodo of the Hebrew, is the counterpart of the monosyllabum verbi standing single in the Chinese.

Had the substantive verb been expressed, the participle would have united, as in our language, with its auxiliary ; the auxiliary would have declined itself, the time of the action have been determined, and the Hebrew had been possessed of a present tense.

In order to have enjoyed an effectual

* Lowth, de Sa. Po. Heb.

participle,

participle; the Chinese must have changed the termination of his primitive : of this he had no conception.

The difficulties to which the inventors of language were subject, in bringing sounds to be permanent signs of ideas, must have made them careful to preserve those signs intire, and apprehensive of defeating their labours by any innovation on the adopted sound. Inflection, therefore, would be of late invention, and more likely to occur to those who should borrow their primitives, than to those who had formed them.

Were we to be governed by the reason of the thing, I should be apt to conclude, that inflection had made no great progress before the establishment of writing : when the eye co-operating with the ear, the change in the termination had a visible signature, and the varying of the sound was no longer hazardous.

To act—action—acting.

The

The gradation in these ideas led the Chinese to attempt a participle; it was but an attempt—As

χο		facere
chi		qui—genitivi nota, faciens.

Let us now observe the steps of the Greek linguist.

ποιειν		facere
το ποιειν		factio
ποιων		faciens
τυγχανω ποιων		sum faciens
ειτυγχανον ποιων		eram faciens.

Here he seems to have stopped short, and to have changed his system, by transferring the conjugation from the auxiliary to the verb itself—

As, *εποιεν* | faciebam.

This was a master-stroke; it superseded the delay

delay of the auxiliary ; put the verb in possession of an undivided energy, and became the principal source of the superiority of the Greek over all the languages, which, following nature's first hints, have adhered to the system on which they set out. With what propriety are these languages called modern ?

If my idea of the advantage bestowed on the verb by the dismissal of the auxiliary, should stand in need of explanation, it will receive it, if I mistake not, from the following example—

Ambrosiæ vero comæ concussæ sunt.

Ἀμβροσίαι δ' ἀρὰ χαιταὶ ἐπερρώσαντο.

In the Latin, the sound and the impression are broken, interrupted ; instead of pressing upon our feelings, as in the Greek, they subside, they are lost in the co-operation of the auxiliary.

The Chinese could not have a participle without changing the termination of the verb ;

verb ; for this reason, they made their infinitive verb to supply its place, as likewise to assume the function of a substantive.

As,	gai		amare,
			amatio.
	ço		facere,
			factio.

The Greeks added, as we have seen, an article to the infinitive το φιλεῖν, το ποιεῖν—perhaps before they had a participle, which is better, as—*the loving, the doing*. Our early writers delighted much in this kind of substantive ; not only as it contributes to *the varying* of the diction ; but that, happily used, it gives strength and beauty to the expression.

The facility with which the verb resolves itself into a substantive, accounts for the substantives coming immediately after the verb in the progress of language ; and this again may serve to account for the phenomenon of a language without adjectives ; which is the case in the Chinese ; for the linguist

linguist being in possession of a noun, or name of a thing, his next care was to make the most of his acquisition ; and having found, that by a certain management of the substantive, or verb, he could make a shift to convert a general quality into a particular attribute, which is the office of the adjective *, he proceeded no further, for in this,

* Substantives, as distinguished from adjectives, are names of qualities abstracted from the consideration of their existence in any particular subject : if, therefore, the Chinese have no other way of attributing qualities to things, than through the medium of the substantive, it follows, that, in the order of thinking, they began with *generals*, and descended to *particulars* ; contrary to the received notion of the progress of the understanding, which is supposed to rise from *particulars* to *generals*.

Do not all the objects in nature present themselves first to our notice in the aggregate ? when a rainbow appears, we see it in the intire ; and pass from thence to the examination of its colours. Will not this apply to all the complex ideas resolvable into sentiments, such as *love, fear, hope, anger, hatred*, and numberless others. The thinking mind will not let this drop.

as in all the other parts, from a constant acquiescence under feeble equivalents, the Chinese is nothing more than a language of attempts; the attainments were reserved for the Greek.

3°. *Futurum.*

The Chinese have, first, a futurum indeterminatum, formed by their indefinite particle, or verb, yao—volo—I will do—
ποιησω.

Quod si post particulam

yao | volo

additum fuerit monosyllabum

leao | præterit.

futurum *quasi* præteritum efficiet.



This

This is the *paûlo post futurum*, μετ' ὀλίγον μελλων *,—as ποιησομαι, I shall have done it presently, 'tis as good as done—*futurum quasi præteritum*.

The learned do not agree in their construction of this tense: resolved into a phrase, it is readily understood: in fact, the sense of every tense amounts to a phrase; and hence it is, that the nature of a tense is best explained by the languages which have not adopted inflection. With this plain road before us, what have we to do with the metaphysical labyrinths, the learned perplexities, of Hermes and his followers?

We have seen that the Chinese has a *præteritum perfectum*; it has likewise a second preterite, equivalent to a similar tense in the

* On peut avoir envie de marquer une chose qui doit arriver bien-tôt, ainsi nous voyons que les Grecs ont leur *paûlo post futurum*, μετ' ὀλίγον μελλων; qui marque que la chose se va faire, ou qu'on la doit presque tenir comme faite—

Gram. Raisonnée.

Greek, in our own, and in every European language, except the Latin :

As,		
	cie	articulo
	na	illius
	xi	temporis
	ngo	ego
	kien	videre.

The pupil of nature thinks at full length, and delivers what he thinks in the order and form in which he thinks.

Art speaks by contractions—*ιδου* *, I saw it—articulo illius temporis.

This

* *ιδου*—This is called an aorist, or indefinite: it may be such, when it stands by itself, and is unapplied; but it cannot be so, where the time of the action is specified, as—*I saw it yesterday*; because, to apply an indefinite tense to a definite time, would be an impropriety. The Latin, it is true, hath not this tense; and so much the worse; for, it is forced to say—*I have seen it yesterday*; which, it must be allowed, is little better than bungling.

The Romans, in forming their language from the Greek,

This tense is a definite of the *past*; in like manner as the paulo post is a definite of the *future*.

From the tenor of the preceding examples it appears, that the variety and precision of the Greek tenses were of the simplest origin; and that the apparently nice distinctions of a first and second future, of a first and second preterite *, were formed on the essays of the primitive linguists. The essay was a phrase; the tense, by inflection, a contraction of the phrase.

As verbs are almost all-efficient in the Chinese, I had determined to confine my

Greek, were too intent on reducing what they thought superfluities: by rejecting the second preterite, instead of clipping a luxuriancy, they lopt off a limb.

Our ancestors were so intent on the possession of this tense, that, contrary to the genius of the language, they forced the verb to submit to inflection.

* We must not expect from the Chinese a duplication of this tense; it is of no apparent use, as a distinction of time; and, to multiply sounds, was no part of their system.

inquiries to them : in this course, my next step would have been, to take into consideration their moods. But I am tempted in this place to break in on the regularity of my subject, and to turn my thoughts to collateral matters. I have a pleasure in changing the objects, and varying the impressions; and, if so, why may it not have the same effect on my reader? Every little relief is allowable in a subject so dry and unenterprising as this,

Of Degrees of Comparison.

The Chinese, having no adjectives, must apply degrees of comparison to verbs and nouns.

As thus to the verb—

lo		volo
ÿeun		magis
magis volens—		

Græcè—λω, volo—λω-ίων, magis volens.

Here the Chinese and Greek are but one language.

Fiunt superlativa,

1°. Particulâ tai | excessivè.

Sic,

tai		excessivè
ta		magnus
maximus.		

C 4

2°. Duplica

2°. Duplica monosyllabum, et habebis superlativum.

kao		altus
* kao		altus
altissimus.		



These two modes were by the Greeks moulded into one; for, having borrowed the sign of excess—*tai*, they formed their superlative by transferring the *iteration* from the thing to the sign: \

As—*υψω-τα-τα*, altissima.

In this instance the imitation in the process is confirmed by the identity in the sound.

The grammarians start at such comparatives as † *καλλος-καλλιων*, ‡ *κυδος-κυδιων*; it

* This superlative runs through all the American languages. It is a manifest specimen of a first attempt.

† Pulchritudo.

‡ Gloria.

is

is a form, say they, quæ prorsus ab omni analogia recedit. This is a mistake ; it was an early practice, antecedent to the rules from which it is supposed to have been a departure : in short, it was borrowed from the Chinese, who have no adjective, and must have been in use with the Greeks at a period when they had few or none.

Les langues Huronnes et Iroquoises (according to Lafitau) n'ont que le verbe, qui domine dans toute la langue, ainsi point de nom substantif et adjectif *. And in another place he observes, that numbers, genders, and persons are not otherwise distinguished than by *tones*. Here they fall short of the Chinese, who have signs for the variations of the same idea, reserving the *tones* for the distinction of different ideas.

* Mœurs des Sauvages.

Of Numbers.

IT seems, at first, difficult to conceive how a plural could be had without a change in the termination. Let us see how the Chinese brought this about.

Fit Pluralis per monosyllaba ; seu particula—muen, et moei—*more*.

Sic,

ngo—ego	ni—tu	ta—ille
ngo	ni	ta
moei—nos	muen—vos	moei—illi.

Here we have a language just out of its cradle ; its attempts, like the steps of a child, are timid, doubtful—prætentat iter.

As I do not know what sound should belong to the n, in ngo, I suppose it to be the representative of a tone ; the Greeks literalized

teralized the tone, which produced their $\varepsilon\gamma\omega$ * : such too, perhaps, was the $\alpha\upsilon$ prefixed to the primitive $ta\text{---}ille$, as in $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$, $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota$, $\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$. As to the Greek $\sigma\upsilon$, Does dicunt

* How natural it was for the Greeks to proceed in this way, may be collected from hence, that the very same thing has been done, of late, by those who have attempted to give us some specimens of the *Ta-hei-te* language, which is manifestly a dialect of the Chinese. These specimens are—

o-tea	the first man.
e-toa	the war tree.
a-ho	a drefs, or cloth.
e-hoo	the breasts.
oo-po	the head.
a-vai	the foot.

The above words are precisely Chinese monosyllables, beginning with a consonant, and ending in a vowel, or diphthong. The apparently initial vowels, o-tea, e-toa, are but the signs of the tones, which determine, as in the Chinese, the different significations of the word. These tones our travellers had no other way of marking, than by a vowel that comes the nearest to the sound of the tone : this it was that led them into the mistake, that their words all begin with a vowel.

“ The

cunt τυ, et cum syllaba νη, τυνη*, this is remarkable; the Doric dialect, which was the old Pelasgic, would not give up its primitive ni. Homer sometimes uses τυνη for συ.

The moei and muen were not quite overlooked in the plurals ἡμεῖς, ἡμῶν.

The Chinese ta moei—he more, or, as we should express it, many hes, marks the procedure of intellect in forming, and of language in conveying, an idea of plurality. This idea is not so obvious as is generally thought; of all the subjects of intellect, the doctrine of Numbers is that in which savages make the slowest progress.

The Greek plural takes up the subject at a period of improvement, and conveys the idea by an appropriated sound, or sign by

“ The words of this language are never terminated by
 “ a consonant. The numerous vowels require a varia-
 “ tion of diphthongs and accents, which often occasion a
 “ material alteration in the sense.”

Forster's Observ. p. 401-2-3.

* Lexicon.

inflection.

inflection. "'Tis impossible," says a learned Grammarian *, "to conceive how any language can want the variation of the noun, where the nature of its signification is such as to admit of plurality."

Unhappily for this remark, we have before us a language which proves it to be very possible. The Grammarian mistakes refinement for nature, or the after thought for the first.

* Clarke, Lat. Gram.

De Genere Nominum.

GENUS determinatur, 1°. Ex rerum natura.

Sic,

gin		homo
niu		foeminitatis
gin		homo
foemina.		



In what does $\theta\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ differ from foeminitatis homo, except in this, that the Chinese, not having an adjective, was forced to make the best use he could of the substantive?

But, was not $\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\eta$ compounded of niu gin, under the customary licence of transposition?

2°. Per monosyllabum designandæ speciei proprium.

Sic,

keûen		canis
ku		mascula
keûen		canis
mu		fœmina

Græcè, ὁ κῦων, ἡ κῦων—a he, a she dog.

Here the gender is confined to the article; probably before inflection had taken place in substantives.

The Chinese had no conception of attributing genders to things inanimate.

According to the *Grammaire Raisonnée*, *les genres ont été inventés pour les terminaisons*. But the Messrs. Du Port Royal have discovered a different origin; they tell us, that—*arbor est feminine, parceque comme une bonne mere elle porte du fruit* * :—*miratur non sua*. How could Frenchmen forget, that,

* Mr. Harris has adopted this idea; he might as well have left it to its legitimate parents.

in their own *la meilleure des langues possibles*, fruit-trees are masculine, and their fruits feminine? Our ancestors did not understand such trifling. "The English language, "with singular propriety, following nature "alone, applies the distinction of masculine "and feminine only to the names of animals *."

The modern Grammarians, in general, accommodate their ideas of propriety to the laws of inflection; they take no notice of the grammar of nature.

* Lowth, Introd. to Eng. Gram.

De Casibus Nominum.

APUD Sinas casus ignoti; ex articulis tantum oritur differentia.

Itaque 1°. Nominativus, et 2°. Accusativus, monosyllabum simplex.



Determined, as in our language, by the sense, and the position.

3°. Genitivus fit per particulam *tis*.



EX ΤΟΥ *ἑρην*—é cœlo.

Our author does not attribute any idea, as in other instances, to the sign of this case; a circumstance which, in a language so ex-

D

plicit

plicit as the Chinese, marks a degree of uncertainty in the nature of cases. Are not the Greek genitive and Latin ablative convertible into each other? The Greek, it is true, *must* use a tense which it has, for one which it has not : but it was not necessary to use a genitive for an accusative—*κλυθι με*, audi me ; or, indifferently, a dative—*κλευθι μοι*.

4°. Ad Dativum utuntur particulis *yū* et *yu*, Gallicè *pour*, *en faveur*.



It will not readily be admitted, that what one objects *to* another, must be in his favour. A case is not to be appropriated to one precise idea : it is best understood in a language in which the preposition does all, and *to* which, as *to* the Chinese, the case is *unknown*. We have but one, a genitive ; and the learned are not agreed as to its meaning or origin.

5°. Vocativus

5°. Vocativus admittit ho, five o, in fine,



The o has only changed its position in
 Ω ανδρες Αθηναιοι.

6°. Quod si Ablativum volueris, habes etiam illa
 Dativi monosyllaba, et præterea—tum.



Συν σοι, θεα—tecum, dea.

This may serve to determine the dispute among the learned, whether the Greek has an ablative or not: *ιδον οφθαλμοις*, is one of the proofs that it has; but here the preposition *συν* is understood, which makes it, as above, the Chinese dative, with its preposition.

“ Si Genitivus adhibetur, additur præpositio.”



This too, in the Greek, is a constant equivalent to an ablative.

Εξ ἵππων ἀποβάντες—ab equis descendentes.

In this, and the preceding example, the case has no energy. What, then, is a case possessed of its energy? It is a sign, by inflection, of some condition or circumstance annexed to the noun, and through the noun to its relatives.

If, therefore, no condition be annexed, except by the preposition, expressed or understood, it should seem that in every such instance the case were altogether useless: but it is not so; in one point of view it is of very great use: for, by the agreement in the terminations, it preserves the connection between the noun and its relatives; without which, transposition could not well have taken place: and, in such a polysyllabic language as the Greek, it had been difficult to preserve a facility of movement, had the words been confined to the natural
order

order of the thoughts. Was it not for the same purpose that every noun had its gender ?

It is probable that cases were invented with a view to a more elegant construction, by dropping the use of the preposition : but the Greeks having observed, that, without the preposition, the case, in many instances, was indecisive ; and that, united with the preposition, it was for the most part insignificant ; they paid more attention to the preposition, and less to the case : the case was to them little more than a varying of the termination.

The Romans took the opposite course : they slighted the preposition, and cultivated the case ; and this it was that led them to the institution of an ablative, which being destined to unite with, or to imply *, the prepositions

* I say, *unite with*, or *imply* ; because it was their object, wherever the sense would suffer it, to exclude the preposition, and do all by inflection : and it must

prepositions *with, from, in, out of,* and others, left the genitive and dative to their own exertions.

The Latin has the advantage in the neatness of the execution; the Greek, in the certainty of expressing the sense*.

It may be objected to me, that I have been too minute on the articles of Number,

be confessed, that, by adhering to this system, they carried their point, and rose upon the Greek in elegance of construction.

* Displeased with the redundance of particles in the Greek, the Romans extended their displeasure to the article, which they totally banished. Was not this to tear away the cloth with the lace?

The *pulchrum* of the Latin, is no equivalent to the *το καλον* of the Greek, or *the beautiful* of the English: it is better when they say, *pulchrum et honestum*; the two adjectives keep each other in countenance.

Aristotle observes, that there is a degree of pleasure in anger—*απο της ελπιδος τε τιμωρησασθαι*. The Latin cannot render that *τε*; it can only translate the verb, or substitute a phrase.

Gender,

Gender, and Case. I will answer in the words of a French Grammarian : Les choses les plus petites deviennent grandes, quand elles peuvent servir aux plus grandes.

De Verborum Modis.

APUD Sinas, cum monosyllabum verbi unum semper idemque fit, et ad tempora et modos ambiguum remaneat, nisi hac vel illa particula vel phrasi restringatur, exponendum nobis hoc loco, quæ modi illi fiant.

De Imperativo.

1°. Est sæpissime monosyllabum infinitivum.

Sic,

co | federe, vel fede.



Græcè :— ως δε συ πεζεν.

Sic et tu facere, i. e. facito.

And again—

— Συ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν

Ἰσχεῖν ἐν στήθεσσι.

Ἰσχεῖν—cohibere, vel cohibere :

an absolute Sinæcism. Of this the examples are not common; just in that proportion which marks the returns of a habit not quite exhausted.

The continual deviations of the Greek language from the laws of grammar, are evident proofs of the prevalence of habits anterior to the establishment of those laws. Can it be supposed that men of sense, after the institution of a grammatical system, would run counter to all analogy through caprice, or in gaiety of spirit, especially where the sounds had been more perfect by a strict adherence to analogy?

2°. Exprimitur Imperativus per circumlocutiones,
et monosyllaba desiderii.

Sic,

cim.		quæso
ki		incipere
scil. incipe.		



Græcè, λεγεις αυ—dic, quæso; or, with
the verb possessed of its mood, κλυοις αυ—
audi, quæso: κλυοις αυ pro κλυθι, optativus
pro imperativo*.

I cannot quit the Chinese imperative,
without taking notice of a remark of our
Grammarian:—

“ Sinæ vix ac ne vix quidem imperando
“ alloquuntur quemquam: itaque impera-
“ tivus honestatis ac comitatis plenus.”

If character is to be brought forward on
this occasion, I should give the preference
to a more natural motive, on a supposition

* Hougeveen.

that

that manners are simple before they are elegant.—There is a nation of savages, so we call them, who have not a form in their language to express a command. To what purpose, say they, should we have a sign for a thing which cannot be; since, all men being equal, no man can have a right to impose his will on another?

The sturdiness of the Huron has more the air of a principle than the politeness of the Chinese.

De Optativo.

Optativum suum formant Sinæ, si verbum yüen, quod est desidero, cupio, usurparint.

Sic,

ngo		ego
yuen		cuperem
ki		incipere

seu, libenter inciperem.

ngo

(60)

ngo	ego
yuen	vellem
xue	dicere



Græcè—*φα-ινν*, *vellem dicere*.

Velle et optare are but degrees of the same affection: hence the Latin hath no optative; and, in our language, to *will* rises to a *wish*, merely by a stronger accent—*would* that I could please you. There is a kind of suspense between the two moods in the following—

Fain *would* I rise, but that I fear to fall.

Have we not in *ινν*, the distinctive termination of the Greek optative, an evident adoption of *yuen*—*vellem*? But the *yuen* of the Chinese is a verb: true, and so are their particles in general. May we not infer from hence, that the Greek particles were likewise

likewise verbs *, but in the change of construction, being forced to give way to the refinement of inflection, they lost their primitive energies ; were reduced, in general, from principals to accessories ; and, *at times*, to something *less* † ?

* This notion would have been slighted, some few years ago, before Mr. Horne had discovered, that a great number of the particles in our language are verbs, or participles, such as, *if, an, and, eke, yet, still, unless, else, though, but, without, lest, since*, and others. This discovery has restored these words, and their similars in other languages, to their just right of being the *names of ideas* : a right of which they had been dispossessed by the grammarians and philosophers who knew not their origin. The supposition, that there could have been words invented, which were not signs of ideas, is a disgrace to philosophy.

† If the particle of itself expresses the idea, as when it supplies the place of a mood in the verb, it is a *principal*—λεγεις αν, dicas. If the idea be expressed without it, it is an *accessory*—λεγοις αν. Is it not, in the latter character, a kind of παραπληρωματικον, except where, though not necessary to the sense, it serves to give some energy to the expression ?

De Subjunctivo.

Quod si nunc quæsieris, Quî Sinæ, tum subjunctivum, tum varia infinitivorum genera, gerundia, futura infinitivi in *rus*, in *dus*, &c. facitent ?

Respondeo, apud Hebræos, Chaldæos, Arabas, Æthiopas, &c. deesse omnia hæc, imo necessaria non esse, cum per præpositiones ac particulas activè et passivè nullo negotio resolvantur :—idem executi Sinæ et ubique *præpositionibus* ac *postpositionibus*.



Among the proofs of the dependence of the Greek on its original, its employment of the preposition and postposition in forming an equivalent to a subjunctive, demands our particular attention.

Οὐδ' ἂν προσειπον, εἰδ' ἂν ἠψαμην χερσιν *.
Neque allocuta essem, neque attigissem manibus.

* Medæa, Eurip.

In this instance, the verb is in one mood and the preposition decides for another.

So likewise the postposition:—

Εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμέ, εἰς τὸ φρεὰρ ἐνεπέσεν αὐν.

If it had not been for me, he would have fallen into a well.

And again,

Σε γὰρ προσηυδὼν ἔκ' αὖ *

Te enim non allocutus fuissē.

But the power of the postposition is most remarkable in its union with the participle, on which it bestows both a mood and the energy of a verb.

Καὶ μὴν ὀφείλων γ' αὖ, τινοίμ' αὐτῷ χάριν. †

Si quidem deberem, ei persolverem gratias.

From these examples, the primitive construction by prepositions and postpositions

* Prometheus, Æsch.

† Ib.

comes

comes out with full evidence : the particle not only assumes to itself the determination of the mood, but, in virtue of its original office, though united with inflection, it supercedes it.

Conclusion.

Conclusion.

LET us now consider, what might be the progress of a system, by which the particle should be deprived of its primitive function, in order to invest the verb with its own modifications. Such a reform, no doubt, would be slow and gradual; and the reformer would often find himself under the necessity of calling in the well-known particle to the support of his novel institution; and thus, prepositions and postpositions would be so blended with the several forms of inflection, that a mixt construction would become a characteristic of the language.

From such a progress it should follow, that the use of particles would be most frequent in the earliest writings. Was not this actually the case? "Mirum," says the

E learned

learned Hougeveen, "quam hac particula
 " $\gamma\epsilon$ veteres fuerint delectati." The $\rho\alpha$ seems
 to have rivalled the $\gamma\epsilon$; and it will readily
 be allowed, that the $\delta\epsilon$, $\kappa\epsilon$, $\tau\epsilon$, were not al-
 together neglected.

When we are intent on explaining a
 thought, or enforcing a sentiment, we love
 to multiply words, and renew the impres-
 sion. The earnest spirit of the Greeks de-
 lighted in these little excesses; the means
 were ever at hand: in proportion as par-
 ticles ceased to be necessary parts of speech,
 they were peculiarly fitted to be the instru-
 ments of exaggeration.

Particles had been primary and essential
 parts of speech; but at length, as hath been
 hinted above, came to be applied to less
 important purposes*. This remains to be
 explained.

Had

* Should we find two, three, or more particles in a
 sentence, and the sense to be complete without any
 one of them, on what ground could we attribute an
 idea to each? This is what Hougeveen has undertaken,
 with

Had the Greeks left their particles in possession of their primitive functions, the constancy in their use, as in simpler languages, would have preserved entire their significations: but, in their shiftings between the character of a principal and an accessory, less attention was paid to their first destination; and, from signs of ideas, they became, on many occasions, mere objects of sound. To connect the final with the initial vowel; to strengthen the weaker movements *, or accelerate the rapid †; to

with some credit, it must be owned, to his ingenuity and erudition. These established, what was it to him, that, like Warburton of learned memory, he proved the reverse of his proposition?

* βη ε'ιδυς τευχες—he rush'd on. The εα (quidem) contributes nothing to the sense; the sound alone gives a spring to the action.

† ———ωσθ' ἵππος———
Ος εα τι ρεῖα θεῖσι τῖταινομενος πεδίοιο.

—————magno nisu contendens————— Clarke.

This was to put the racer to a waggon, with broad wheels.

counteract the excess of polysyllables, and simplify, as it were, the luxury of sound * ; were their mechanical uses. Every page of the Iliad will furnish proofs of this doctrine ; and, in prose, the sweet-tongued Xenophon will be its advocate.

It must seem strange, that the Greeks, who multiplied sounds solely to flatter the ear, should not have them in sufficient number to distinguish their ideas : thus, they had an α privative, an α enforcive, and a third, which was neither the one nor the other. They must have had means of distinction unknown to us : perhaps those means were in the tones.

* *Ὁ δὲ Κυρὸς ὅ, τι δεοῖντο αὐτῶν οἱ παῖδες, διὰ τὴν φιλο-
θροῦπιαν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν περὶ παντός ἐποίησεν τὸ διαπρατῆσθαι·
καὶ ὁ Ἀγυαγῆς δὲ ὅ, τι δεοῖντο αὐτῶν ὁ Κυρὸς, ἔδεν ἔδυνατο ἀν-
τιλεγεῖν μὴ ἔχαριζεσθαι.*

De Instit. Cyri.

Does not the music, such as it is, of our own tongue depend, in a great measure, on the balance of our native monosyllables with the polysyllables which we have borrowed from other languages ? And is it not from a want of this temperament, in the Latin, that its periods are so often overcharged with sound ?

Toni

Toni sunt quinque.

1º. &c. &c.



Inque rapit coetus medios, turbamque sonantem.

I am not qualified to accompany my Author in this curious investigation: to form precise ideas of sounds which I had never heard, and to receive them, under this disadvantage, as equivalents to articulations, would be a task to which I feel myself very unequal. It comes more within my compass to consider the Chinese tones merely as the forerunners of language; or, if I may be indulged in such an idea, as a kind of pre-existing spirits, destined to assume more substantial forms.

— Animæ, quibus altera fato
Corpora debentur.

Here a new subject opens upon us. Let us imagine the Chinese primitives, with their

their family tones, passing, as it were, in colonies, and at different periods, into Tary, Scythia, and the north of Europe. I conceive, that the precision requisite to preserve the functions of the tones, would be subject, in these successive migrations, to many interruptions; and that the consequent indecision of these fugitive signs would throw men on the necessity of substituting fixed and permanent articulations. I will suppose a predilection for monosyllables to continue in some force; and the primitive to be confirmed in its different significations by the varied insertions and combinations of consonants.

Sed de linguarum similitudine et convenientia, item de origine earum, ac matrice illa primæva lingua, latior spatiosiorque est campus quam qui meo ingenio pertractari possit: magna mirandaque ea in re latere *μυστηρια*, et quæ nemo, nisi omnium prope linguarum peritus, aperire possit, haud perfectius sum.

F I N I S.



ERRATUM.

P. 13. note, for προκατιζοντων, read προκαθιζοντων.





